



How short-term mobility can work as a strategic tool to boost participation of students in international exchange programmes

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Short-term mobility: explanation

Short-term mobility – explanation.



Definition – EU Commission, Erasmus Guide:

Erasmus+ short-term mobility represents a specific type of mobility taking typically between 5 and 30 days.

Often combining physical and virtual activities

Why Short-term mobilities?

- Extend Innovative Teaching Method
- Provide opportunities for a wider range of participants

What we usually call as a Short-term Mobility?

- Doctoral Mobility
- Blended Intensive programmes (BIP)
- Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)
- Summer/winter schools

Short-term Doctoral Mobility



- ✓ Allows PhD students to undertake a short physical stay abroad for 5 to 30 days for study or traineeship.
- ✓ PhD mobility as a compulsory part of the doctoral study programme in the Czech Republic – with short-term options easily available for working students.
- ✓ Number of places is limited due to limited financial support.





Blended Intensive Programmes

- ✓ Relatively **new type** of mobility that combines short-term **physical mobility with a virtual component**
- ✓ Introduced in the programme period 2021–2027.
- ✓ Jointly developed by at least **three higher education institutions** from three different countries – close cooperation of partners is needed
- ✓ Short term physical part: **5–30 days of physical stay abroad**
- ✓ **Virtual component** – workshops, meetings, lectures, etc.
- ✓ **Relatively expensive** (financial support is available only to a limited number of students at the universities) and time demanding for organizational staff.

Blended Intensive Programmes



Main benefits

- Mobilities available for most of students.
- Intense period of being together on site, enables more opportunities for stronger group bonding.
- Students with positive experience recommend the institution or decide for a longer mobility.

Main challenges

- Long process to prepare and a lot of commitment and resources are required from both staff and participating students.
- Online part of the activity can sometimes be perceived as an overload. It is arguably easier to be fully committed to an activity when participants are together in person (regular icebreakers).
- It is not always easy to keep the group together (team building activities are welcome).
- Need for equal access to the internet and digital devices, as well as adequate digital competences.

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)



- ✓ University students from different countries collaborate on a project online (no physical mobility).
- ✓ Project is co-designed by professors and often incorporated into the regular curriculum.
- ✓ Innovative teaching and learning method are used.
- ✓ Students work in teams with peers from other universities on specific projects, using online technology to connect and complete tasks.

Main benefits

- ✓ Learning opportunities available for students who cannot participate in traditional physical mobility
- ✓ Students develop important skills, including collaboration, cross-cultural competence, foreign language, and digital competence
- ✓ Often more cost-effective and environmentally friendly than physical exchanges
- ✓ No "paperwork" needed.

COIL is also an interesting method of "**Internacionalization at home**".

Summer/winter schools



There is **no precise definition** of the term of summer/winter schools, but we can find out a general description:

- ✓ Summer school refers to **educational programs or courses offered during the summer break**, typically between the end of one academic year and the beginning of the next. These programs cater to students of various ages and academic levels (<https://www.summerboardingcourses.com/blogs/what-is-summer-school-the-complete-guide/>)
- ✓ The summer school is, for several reasons, a remarkable feature of higher education today. First, it entails a **relatively short course, taken during the summer** break by students mainly from other institutions and other countries. (<https://www.eaie.org/asset/8309561D-5187-43C8-9F0C0BC697312854/>)
- ✓ classes that students at a school, college or university can take during the summer (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/summer-school#google_vignette)

Struggles with mobility numbers

Struggles with mobility numbers/obstacles for mobility



Number of student mobilities is **still low** compared to number of students who are eligible for mobility.

Total number of students at VSB-TUO: approx. 12 000, not everyone is eligible

Number of outgoing students: approx. 200 per AY

% of outgoing students: approx. 2 %

Research made between students – questionnaires, personal questioning – **the biggest obstacles** for going for a semester mobility:

- ✓ **Personal and family reasons**
- ✓ **Study and institutional barriers**
- ✓ **Financial and work issues**
- ✓ **Language and motivation**

Struggles with mobility numbers/obstacles for mobility



1 Personal and family reasons

- family, partners, friends, kids
- health problems, health and safety issues
- personal fear from stepping outside the comfort zone

2 Study and institutional barriers

- study obligations at home university
- administrative barriers (e.g. Study barriers typically on study programs aligned with national legal frameworks and standards – civil engineering, fire safety, etc.)
- access to information

Struggles with mobility numbers/obstacles for mobility



3 Financial and work issues

- Work duties, lost of job
- financial issues – grant not sufficient, extra cost when in abroad

4 Language and motivation

- low motivation
- low level of language knowledge



Motivation



Motivation: from the EC point of view

EC motivation for implementing short-term mobility:

1 Inclusion and equal opportunities

- ✓ Opens mobility to students with fewer opportunities
- ✓ Helps those with financial or personal barriers participate
- ✓ Supports easier integration into study programmes

2 Accessibility and flexibility

- ✓ Makes international experience available to a wider range of students
- ✓ Allows participation even with work, family, or health limitations

3 Innovation and digital transformation

- ✓ Blended and virtual formats broaden access and participation
- ✓ Encourages use of new technologies and digital tools

4 Diversification of mobility formats

- ✓ Short-term, blended, and thematic programmes make mobility more attractive and achievable
- ✓ Offers students varied experiences adapted to their needs

Motivation: university point of view



1 Strategic development and internationalisation

- ✓ Increasing the total number of mobilities
- ✓ Building and strengthening partnerships
- ✓ Testing cooperation before launching long-term exchanges
- ✓ Enhancing university visibility and reputation abroad
- ✓ Follow the new trends in education
- ✓ Testing ourselves – how far are we able to go

2 Flexibility and inclusion

- ✓ Short-term mobility as a **“first step”** towards semester mobility
- ✓ Opens opportunities for students with fewer resources or personal constraints
- ✓ Supports inclusive participation and diversity
- ✓ Offer students new Education formats that support inclusion and diversity

Motivation: university point of view



3 Digital transformation and innovation

- ✓ Promoting new mobility formats
- ✓ Encouraging digital competences and online teamwork among students and staff

4 Quality enhancement and sustainability

- ✓ Gradual pathway:

COIL → BIP → Long-term mobility/full-degree student

- ✓ Strengthening academic cooperation and course innovation

Benefits of short-term mobility

Benefits of short-term mobility for university



1 Participation & Accessibility

- ✓ Increases both student and staff mobility numbers
- ✓ Encourages wider participation
- ✓ Promotes inclusion and supports student diversity

2 Flexibility & Innovative Formats

- ✓ Offers flexible schedules and formats
- ✓ Supports virtual and blended learning
- ✓ Fosters modern teaching methods and digital skills

3 Campus & Partnership Benefits

- ✓ Builds confidence for longer exchanges
- ✓ Enriches campus life through international diversity
- ✓ Strengthens academic partnerships and cooperation

Benefits of short-term mobility for students



1 Academic Development

- ✓ Exposure to new teaching methods and different ways of learning
- ✓ Improved understanding of subject areas through international perspectives
- ✓ Development of digital and blended learning skills

2 Intercultural & Social Competences

- ✓ Meeting new people from different cultures
- ✓ Enhanced intercultural understanding and communication skills
- ✓ Increased adaptability and openness to diversity

3 Personal & Professional Growth

- ✓ Higher confidence in the job market
- ✓ Development of personal skills: independence, problem-solving, self-management
- ✓ Building networks for future academic or professional opportunities

Benefits of short-term mobility for students



4 Flexibility & Future Readiness

- ✓ Experience with blended and flexible learning formats
- ✓ Ability to manage learning in diverse and digital environments
- ✓ Readiness for lifelong learning and future mobility opportunities

5 Development of key competences:

- ✓ teamwork, cooperation
- ✓ digital literacy
- ✓ intercultural communication
- ✓ critical thinking
- ✓ language competences

How to implement short-term mobility

How to implement short-term mobility: COIL project



<https://www.ekf.vsb.cz/doit/en/results/pr-3/>



VIDEO - DO IT - What is COIL



DO IT COIL Manual

Eva Haug, Amsterdam UAS



Co-funded by the European Union
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COIL or VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

	Collaborative: peer to peer experiential learning with a focus on working together (team skills)
	Online: learning how to work in a remote team and manage digital tools in a professional context
	International: cross cultural learning by bringing the world into your classroom, offering non mobile students an international experience
	Learning: enhancing existing curriculum with virtual collaboration and learning from peers around the world

Source: Eva H.
Amsterdam UAS,
training for it



How to implement short-term mobility: BIP project



<https://www.ekf.vsb.cz/doit/en/results/pr-4/>

This handbook is dedicated to help those who wish to experience the benefits of Blended Learning, while organising BIPs in the Erasmus+ framework. It provides a comprehensive overview of BIPs, by explaining what the BIPs are, offering some tips helpful in BIPs organisation, as well as suggesting some interesting resources. We believe this handbook offers



VIDEO - DO IT - What is BIP



Box 5: Practical tips for crafting a good BIP curriculum

→ **review examples of successful BIP programs**, to get some inspiration on how to incorporate challenge-based learning and study visits to solve real-life problems

e.g. SustainableLogistics4Climate, Open Innovation Lab: Using design thinking to solve regional challenges of Climate Change <https://ec.europa.eu/katowice/pl/bip-2023/>

Difficulties you may face

What difficulties you may face during planning and organization



1 Administration

- ✓ Compressed procedures similar to long-term mobility
- ✓ ECTS credit recognition
- ✓ Intensive communication with students, partners and academics in a short timeframe
- ✓ Compliance with institutional and Erasmus+ reporting requirements

2 Finance & Planning

- ✓ Funding applications up to 1 year in advance
- ✓ Requires long-term planning
- ✓ Keep in mind the timeline

3 Communication & Coordination

- ✓ Collaboration with partner institutions' International Offices
- ✓ Coordinating online preparation and onsite tasks

What difficulties you may face during planning and organization



4 Student Engagement

- ✓ Ensuring consistent motivation and active participation
- ✓ Limited time to adapt to new teaching methods or cultural differences
- ✓ Varying levels of digital literacy for online components
- ✓ Student reluctance to participate fully in virtual or blended tasks

5 Crisis Management & Team Dynamics

- ✓ Managing international teams: personalities, pressure, language barriers
- ✓ Staff acting as facilitator and mediator

6 Logistics & Practical Issues

- ✓ Travel delays or cancellations affecting program schedule
- ✓ Access to necessary facilities or technology onsite

Good practice examples

Good practice examples.



BIPS organized at VSB-TUO

Faculty of Mining and Geology

- Industrial past, Sustainable Future: Pathways to a Greener Tomorrow (2025) **U!**

Faculty of Economics

- How to organize Blended Intensive Programme (2023)
- Leadership and sustainability (2023)
- Project and Grant Management: From Theory to Practice (2024) **U!**
- Project and Grant Management: from Theory to Practice (2025)

Faculty of Civil Engineering

- Common Regeneration (2023)
- How to understand brownfields - threat or opportunity? (2025) **U!**
- In the time of changes – planning resilient cities for the future (2025) **U!**
- Alternative application of waste materials to reduce carbon footprint – the path to a circular economy (**March 2026**)

University International office

- U!REKA Staff BIP (2024) **U!**

Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

- Network technologies (2025) **U!**

Faculty of Safety Engineering

- International Autumn School in the Health, Safety and Environment (2023)
- International School in Crisis Planning (2024)
- Health, Safety and Environment (**November 2025**)

Good Practice

International Autumn School in the Health, Safety and Environment



Practical risk assessment and management in multicultural teams.

- Long-term partnership between VSB-TUO, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp, IP Porto and European University Cyprus.
- Close cooperation with companies.
- Short-term mobility as a logical result of the partnership.
- Positive student experience contributes to longer training mobilities.

Good Practice

Project and Grant Management: From Theory to Practice

January 2025, second edition



- ✓ 21 students
- ✓ 8 countries, new contracts as well as long-term partners (Malta, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia)
- ✓ Introducing the selected aspects of project and grant management via contemporary methodologies, principles and tools applied in a global international environment
- ✓ Common dinner, visit to Planetarium, sightseeing and other free-time activities



Conclusion and wrap-up

Conclusion



What to remember:

- ✓ **Complementary Offer:** short-term mobility is not going to replace the long-term mobility. Think of it as a complementary offer to your students and staff.
- ✓ **Innovation:** Encourages new teaching methods and creative learning approaches
- ✓ **Internationalization at Home:** Brings global perspectives to campus without extended travel
- ✓ **Active Learning:** Students and staff learn by doing in a practical, collaborative environment
- ✓ **Accessible & Flexible:** Fits diverse student needs and schedules, promoting inclusion
- ✓ **Strengthening Partnerships:** Enhances collaboration with international institutions

**Thank you for your
attention.**

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